

Reading Explorers™ come from Benchmark Education's Early Connections and Navigators series which are aligned with the National Standards for Social Studies, Math, and Science as included in **Exhibit A**.

Specifically included in **Exhibit B** is an outline of how Reading Explorers™ meets each of the Michigan English Language Arts Content Standards.

## **2. Staff**

Benchmark Education Company will contract with a Site Coordinator at each school site who will facilitate the implementation of the Reading Explorers™ Tutoring Program at elementary and middle schools throughout Michigan. The responsibilities of the Site Coordinator include: recruiting the tutors, supervising the tutors, assisting with the start-up of the program, and overseeing the administration of the program. The school's administration will work closely with the Site Coordinator on important issues such as selection of students for the program, communication with the students' homes, assisting with record-keeping, setting up tutor training dates, acting as the instructional guide and facilitator for the tutors, and, as needed, acting as the liaison between the home, the tutor, and classroom teacher.

The Benchmark Education Site Coordinator will meet the "No Child Left Behind" requirements of the "Highly Qualified Teacher" having: a bachelor's degree, full state certification and licensure, and competency in English Language Arts. Certified teachers are preferred as tutors, however all tutors will have a minimum of a two-year associates degree or the equivalent and demonstrated experience working with elementary and/or middle school students. Reading Explorers™ tutors will receive two full days of Reading Explorers™ training by Benchmark Education's OverTime™ Professional Development team. The Site Coordinator and all tutors will be subject to Michigan requirements for checking criminal history.

## **3. Program Effectiveness**

Reading Explorers™ was created to provide a complete intervention program and approach to comprehensive literacy, reflecting the instructional needs identified by the National Research Council (NRC) in the report *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Attached as **Exhibit C** is a detailed chart of the significant instructional needs identified by the NRC for children in elementary school that are fundamental to the "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001 including but not limited to, phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, reading comprehension, background knowledge and vocabulary. This exhibit includes each the important characteristics of the Reading Explorers™ Tutoring Program that are designed to address each of these critical instructional needs.

**Exhibit D** cites the Research Base and Resources supporting the goals below and outlines how the program components and professional tutor training included in Reading Explorers™ meets the critical goals of:

Tutoring effectiveness,  
Phonemic awareness, systematic phonics and vocabulary, and  
Comprehension, fluency and motivation.

The program encourages fluency and motivation to read and incorporates daily lessons, writing activities and strategies for writing. The program includes paired fiction and non-fiction book sets, explicit lesson plans, assessment administration materials, picture and word cards, student sets with personal dictionaries, journals and take-home materials.

An independent evaluation was conducted in 2003 to analyze the effectiveness of Reading Explorers™ and to demonstrate the gains achieved by students enrolled in the Reading Explorers™ tutoring program. A summary of the evaluation is provided as **Exhibit E**. Attached as **Exhibit F** is a list of testimonials from Reading Explorers™ customers.

#### 4. Evaluation/Monitoring

The Reading Explorers™ program has assessment measures built into the program for listening comprehension, reading comprehension, spelling/phonics and writing. These assessment tools are designed to measure students' growth and success in literacy skills as a result of participating in the Reading Explorers™ Tutoring Program. There are pre-program assessments and post-program assessments for each of these areas. Copies of the assessments with answer keys, a Writing Checklist for evaluating writing samples, and a copy of the Student Assessment Record are included in the program. Assessments may be administered in one tutoring session or divided into sections and administered during four tutoring sessions.

Benchmark Education encourages school administrators and classroom teachers to utilize well-known diagnostic tests such as *Developmental Reading Assessment*, *Scholastic Reading Inventory*, and *Qualitative Reading Inventory* to identify students' skill or knowledge gaps and to form goals for each student. Diagnostic testing in conjunction with the Reading Explorers™ assessment will allow students' teachers to evaluate their students' progress, make changes to students' goals, and report progress to students' parent/guardians.

Engaging the student's parent/guardian in the reading process and communicating with the parent/guardian is a key part of the Reading Explorers™ Tutoring Program. An Informational Session Invitation Letter is sent home to encourage parents/guardians to attend an informational session before the program begins. Specific meetings are held with the parent/guardian to explain the need for the home to be supportive of the Home Connection exercise sent home each day. At this meeting, an Acceptance Letter is filled